



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service
Lassen
National
Forest

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File Code: 2300/1920

Date: December 14, 2009

Dear Interested Party:

On December 18, the Lassen National Forest will release the Motorized Travel Management Final Environmental Impact Statement for a 30-day public review period, which will end on Tuesday, January 19, 2010. The Final Environmental Impact Statement analyzes the effects of six alternatives, five action alternatives and a No-action Alternative, as well as, a response to public comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The Access and Travel Management planning process on the Lassen National Forest are part of a national effort to define transportation systems on each national forest. The goal is to develop a system of roads and trails that provide an array of opportunities for access and recreation on national forests, as well as protection of various resources by limiting motorized vehicle cross-country travel.

The Forest would like to make the public aware that it will not be issuing a decision at this time. Typically, the Record of Decision and the Final Environmental Impact Statement are issued at the same time. The reason for the departure in this case is that the Forest would like to give people time to digest the changes between the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement. There is a new preferred alternative, Modified Alternative 5, which was developed in response to public comments and the completed mixed use safety analysis. This alternative was analyzed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement. It is based on Alternative 5 with some important changes. There were significant mixed use safety issues identified in Alternative 5's proposed mixed use designations, so some routes proposed for mixed use in Alternative 5 were dropped from the Modified Alternative 5. (Mixed use refers to allowing both highway and non-highway legal vehicles to drive on higher maintenance level roads that facilitate travel by passenger car.)

The Notice of Availability in the Federal Register is expected to be published on December 18th, 2009. The release of the Final Environmental Impact Statement begins a 30-day comment period. This new 30-day comment period does not require the public to resubmit their comments to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement; those comments have been considered and incorporated into the Final Environmental Impact Statement. Rather, the Lassen National Forest is providing the public with a final opportunity to comment on the changes between Draft and Final; thus potentially influencing the decision before the Record of Decision is signed. This comment period does not give appeal standing, but does provide an opportunity to review and comment on the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Open House:

To assist the public with understanding these changes, the Lassen National Forest will be holding an open house in January. The open house will be held Thursday, January 7th, from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m., at Chester Memorial Hall, 225 Gay St., Chester, CA. This open house will provide an opportunity to ask questions of Forest staff. If you are unable to attend the open house, your comments may be submitted either electronically via e-mail or written comments may be mailed.



How to comment:

All comments on the Motorized Travel Management Final Environmental Impact Statement including those submitted electronically must be received by midnight Tuesday, January 19th, 2010. Hand delivered comments must be received at the Forest Supervisor’s Office no later than 4:30 p.m. on this date. Please email your comments to: ltmrd@fs.fed.us, or mail your written comments to:

Lassen National Forest
Attn: Travel Management
2550 Riverside Drive
Susanville, CA 96130

How to obtain copies of the document:

There are essentially three ways to receive copies of the Final Environmental Impact Statement, hardcopy, CD, or from the website. Due to its size, we are asking those interested to view and read the document at the Lassen National Forest’s website at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/lassen> or with a CD ROM, also available upon request. The CDs will have PDF files of the FEIS and Appendices, as well as all the maps. Many of the maps are multi-layered and viewing with Adobe Reader allows the viewer to click layers on and off. A map index and instructions for viewing the maps are also included. You may also request paper copies, but these are expensive to reproduce, so we ask that requests for printed maps be tailored to the specific maps desired.

For those who do not have internet access, maps, documents, and CDs will be available for viewing at the following offices and locations:

Lassen National Forest Supervisor’s Office
2550 Riverside Drive
Susanville, CA 96130

Eagle Lake Ranger District
477-050 Eagle Lake Road
Susanville, CA 96130

Almanor Ranger District
900 East Highway 36
Chester, CA 96020

Hat Creek Ranger District
43225 East Highway 299
Fall River Mills, CA 96028

For more information about the Final Environmental Impact Statement or upcoming open house, check the website or contact Christopher O’Brien, Public Services Staff Officer, at (530) 252-6698 or Dave Pilz, Environmental Coordinator, at (530) 252-6659.

I appreciate your participation in this process and encourage you to stay involved in this and subsequent phases of this planning effort. This is not a final designated road system, as the Forest will annually review the Lassen NF’s travel management system to determine if changes are needed.

Sincerely,

/s/ Kathleen S. Morse
KATHLEEN S. MORSE
Forest Supervisor